

<sup>4:1</sup> Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because whoever suffers in the body is done with sin. <sup>2</sup> As a result, they do not live the rest of their earthly lives for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God. <sup>3</sup> For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do—living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. <sup>4</sup> They are surprised that you do not join them in their reckless, wild living, and they heap abuse on you. <sup>5</sup> But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. <sup>6</sup> For this is the reason the gospel was preached even to those who are now dead, so that they might be judged according to human standards in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit.

<sup>7</sup> The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. <sup>8</sup> Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. <sup>9</sup> Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. <sup>10</sup> Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. <sup>11</sup> If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

### Review the context.

- In dealing with suffering, attitude is *everything*. How does an individual change his/her attitude? How can a community (church) be able to make attitude adjustments?

### Understand it.

- Verses 1-2 review the argument that Jesus' suffering – and his attitude *toward* suffering – *enable* believers to live for the will of God. How does this happen?
- Where does Peter say our purification from sin comes from?
- What makes those who choose sinful lifestyles "heap abuse" on believers? (v.4)
- Peter returns to the doctrinal argument regarding the Gospel's proclamation to the dead (see 3:19-20). We profess this in the Apostles Creed when we say (of Jesus), "he descended into hell." What is Jesus' mission to those who perished without knowing the Gospel?
- How does Peter distinguish between the judgment *and* the offer of life? (v.5-6)
- What awaits those who have died if they have professed faith in the Lord? What awaits those who have died who have rejected the Gospel?
- "The end of all things is near." Peter echoes a theme in the New Testament that the End (aka the "Day of the Lord") is approaching. Do you believe this? What practical disciplines are emphasized and how will they help believers prepare for Christ's return? (v.7-10)
- What is the purpose of our praise? (v.11)

### Apply it.

- When others engage in sinful behavior and invite you to join them, do you resist or participate? If they ridicule you or act frustrated when you do not join in, how do you (or could you) respond?
- **Journal idea:** Of the list of practical disciplines (v.7-10), which do you find difficult to practice? Write on your dependence upon God to live out these acts of love.
- What are the gifts God has given you to encourage the faithful or to draw others to God? (v.10)